

**7 HEALTH  
TIPS THAT  
PROVE YOUR  
GRANNY  
WAS RIGHT**

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**ANNA BENNETT**

# INTRODUCTION

Stories that help us to navigate our life experience, have been around forever. Sayings, tales and songs, were traditionally the way that top quality tips, tricks and hacks, were repeatedly passed on.

In the West many people have stopped passing on these life tips, especially around health care, preferring instead, to rely heavily on modern medicine.

I want to reinvigorate some of these traditional healing ideas and prove that we need both modern and time-honoured medicine, for a balanced experience.

The old wisdoms can be brought bang up to date. I'll show you how they are as relevant today, how they can be applied in our fast moving new world and give you strong evidence that your granny was indeed a prophet!

The areas of health care that seem to have been most prevalent in my clinic are:

- **WEIGHT LOSS**
- **FATIGUE & PERFORMANCE**
- **DEALING WITH CHANGE**
- **PAIN MANAGEMENT**
- **INFORMATION OVERLOAD**
- **DEPRESSION**
- **FERTILITY**

Each of the above are discussed within the seven health tips over the following pages.

**BREAKFAST LIKE A  
KING, LUNCH LIKE  
A PRINCE AND DINE  
LIKE A PAUPER**



This traditional wisdom is such a good piece of information to pass on (I was very close to replacing it with '**A moment on the lips, a lifetime on the hips**').

Eating our largest meal at the beginning of the day and our smallest at the end, really works, and here's why. It has a lot to do with Sumo wrestlers... (stay with me)

If a sumo wrestler wants to **put on** weight the first thing he does, is to **miss breakfast**. Wrestlers eat two meals a day. The main meal, which takes place at noon, and an evening meal.

The reason this is so effective is because it slows the metabolism down, so they are much more likely to retain the weight. From a Chinese medical perspective, missing breakfast also greatly affects the Spleen's performance, which is a key organ in the process of digestion.

So for **weight loss**, eat really well at breakfast. It's also important to consume your food with regularity, as consistency is also a key aspect when trying to stay lean.

A top tip is to choose some form of protein for your first meal of the day. This helps hunger stay away for longer and you avoid snacking.

The Stomach and Spleen organs are at their optimum between 7.00am and 11.00am, so eating our biggest meal of the day at breakfast means that food is broken down and absorbed more easily in the first half of the day.

As the day goes on our metabolism slows, so smaller meals are advised. If we eat our last meal of the day, early in the evening (6.00pm) it gives us a chance to digest it fully before bed.

All of this leads to a highly functioning digestive system, which is not only good for weight loss, but which also removes toxicity efficiently.

**EARLY TO BED, EARLY  
TO RISE, MAKES YOU  
HEALTHY, WEALTHY  
AND WISE**

**—**

It's not hard to see why this rhyme was passed on over the centuries, as sleep (or lack of it) can have such a profound effect on our performance.

The Chinese are such advocates of sleep, that they recommend a power nap between 1.00 - 3.00pm, when the energy of the body, moves from the Heart to the Small intestine, helping to aid the digestion of lunch. What a great excuse for a snooze during the day!

Over thousands of years the Chinese noticed that each of our organs has an optimum two-hour time frame, during the twenty-four-hour daily cycle. From a performance point of view, we can take this information and make choices which make our day-to-day experience smoother.

For example the two-hour timespan for the Heart, is between 11.00am and 1.00pm. In Chinese medicine, one of the properties the Heart is known for, is its ability to connect us to other people. That's why I always use this time slot to make important phone calls or to book big meetings, as the communication is invariably better.

I discuss this in much more detail in my book **HEALTH TOOLKIT - A 7-STEP DIY GUIDE TO OUTRAGEOUS GOOD HEALTH**. In it, I give many more examples of how you can optimise your day.

I'm really interested in performance because it is ultimately about our ability to recover. I'm fascinated by people's efficacy under their own perceived pressure. What is it that sometimes enables us to cope very easily and other times, not so well?

How is it that there are individuals who manage to stay incredibly pragmatic in some of the most uncomfortable situations and what are the strategies they employ to achieve that?

The following story gives a really good example of performance under pressure and, I think, imparts a great strategy for when we are feeling a little overwhelmed.

In chapter thirteen of his brilliant book 'Touching the void', Joe Simpson, describes his challenging experience when mountaineering. Alone and with a badly fractured leg, Joe had no choice but to crawl across a boulder field in order to make it back to his base camp and ultimately save his own life.

In this bleakest of situations, he used his watch to keep himself sane by timing and setting goals.

'I timed myself religiously. I looked ahead to a landmark and gave myself half an hour to reach it - The watch became as crucial as my good leg.'

By dividing the effort down into manageable parts, he made great progress focusing on the simple task at hand. That process also meant he was able to alleviate the fear by keeping his mind busy.

Another top tip which I recently heard, came from a friend who had worked in the private sector. She noticed that her boss - a director in the company - would isolate himself for five minutes before any high-pressured meeting, so that he could practice his juggling skills. This was his way of silencing a fearful mind, by providing it with just one thing to focus upon.



**CHANGE IS  
INEVITABLE**

**(EXCEPT FROM VENDING MACHINES)**





Yes, not exactly our classic ancient wisdom, however **Change** is the common thread that connects all of the patients that come to see me. Either they want something to change, or they are coping with change that's already in process.

Below are two stories for you which might help you to get your head around change.

## PERHAPS

A woman owned a ranch and kept many horses in the paddock next to her family home. One night a heavy storm passed through the valley and blew the fencing down, all of her horses scattered into the wilderness.

"How unlucky!" her neighbours cried, "perhaps" was her answer.

Her daughter and son went after the animals and not only did they find all the original horses, but also brought back some wild stallions with them.

All the neighbours said "that's fortuitous!" the woman replied "perhaps".

Her son rode one of the wild stallions and was thrown off, breaking his leg.

"How terrible for you" the neighbours said "perhaps" came the woman's considered response.

Soon after that an army visited the ranch looking to recruit her son but he couldn't go because of his injury.

Everyone said "that's fortunate!" the woman's reply... "perhaps".

## MOVING ON

Two Monks were walking through the countryside and had to cross a river in order to get home. When they reached the river bank they found it was unusually high as the rains had arrived early.

A woman joined them on the river bank, also needing to cross to the other side. She had waded across the river the previous day, but now on her return, found the water too deep.

The Monks decided that if they took their time, they could make it across. The elder monk offered to carry the woman and she accepted his kind offer.

After reaching the other side she and the monks parted company and continued on their way.

After several hours had passed the younger monk stopped the elder monk. He was troubled because, as monks, they had both taken vows, which meant they weren't allowed to touch women and the elder monk had clearly broken that vow.

The elder monk turned to the younger monk and said "I put her down four hours ago, why are you still carrying her?"

**DON'T SIT ON A  
COLD STONE FLOOR**



I'm not sure exactly when you *would* sit on a cold stone floor, it's so uncomfortable! Anyway, it turns out that this saying is accurate because cold is responsible for a lot of the physical pain that I see in my clinic.

In Chinese medicine part of the diagnosis is to observe temperature and to work out if peoples bodies are holding more heat or cold. Cold can be a contributing factor, when diagnosing a patients pain.

A great way of describing the action that cold has on us, is to imagine a glass of water. Add heat to that water and it would start to boil and evaporate. Add cold, and the water would congeal, eventually freezing. We are roughly 60% water, so both temperatures have similar effects on our cells.

When cold 'invades' the body it can get stuck, particularly in muscle tissue. Also, if an area of the body is deficient (e.g. the energy isn't fully flowing to it) then that particular part becomes even more susceptible to the cold.

'Wind' can combine with 'cold' to invade muscle tissue even quicker. A great example of this happened when I was on a long haul flight a few years ago. I fell asleep for a few hours with my right knee next to the aisle. The air conditioning of the plane was blowing a very light breeze down the central aisles and it was noticeably chilly.

When I woke, I had a sharp pain in my knee, the joint felt very cold and was locked in a bent position. I limped off the plane but did manage to appreciate the fine example of 'Wind-Cold Invasion'. Always wrap up when it's windy!

The way to deal with an 'Invasion of Cold' is to treat it with its opposite - heat. I know that piece of information isn't exactly a revelation, but it's simplicity is truly magic.

I use heat lamps to warm the tissue that feels particularly chilly and this can have a great effect on pain.

I've seen a lot of chronic back problems in my clinic and many of them respond very quickly to the heat that is applied to them. Plenty of my patients spend their evenings watching TV, with a hot water bottle warming their lower back (I don't get many complaints when I suggest that as a solution!)



**TOO MUCH  
TELEVISION WILL  
MAKE YOUR  
EYES SQUARE**



Ok, so this saying isn't exactly age-old wisdom but with more and more screen time in our lives, the guru granny's might just have a point.

The first colour television sets started showing up in people's homes during the 1950's and since then there has been a steady explosion of screens in our daily lives. From watches to vehicle dashboards, flat screens are now everywhere and with them comes vast amounts of ever increasing information.

The Chancellor of the University of Bristol, Sir Jeremy Morse, gave a talk to the graduate students in 2003 and that was the very subject he chose to speak about.

He said "The most difficult thing that your generation will have to deal with, is the huge amount of information coming at you. Your greatest challenge will be filtering out that noise, to find what is most important."

Fifteen years on and his advice is more relevant than ever, as so many of us are **feeling overwhelmed**. Our filtering now needs to be increasingly enhanced as well as our ability to unplug completely.

When was the last time you totally switched off your mobile phone?

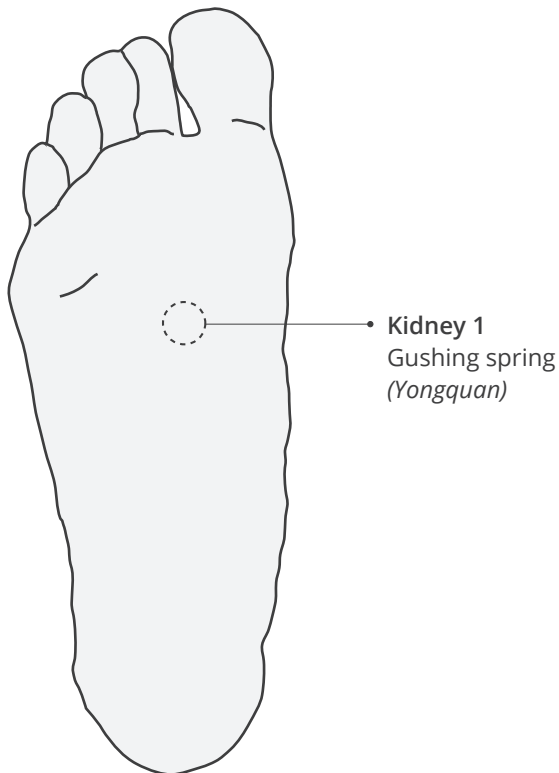
Convalescence is a forgotten art. It was often prescribed by medical practitioners, giving people a designated period of time for their bodies to rest and fully recover.

In the UK, schemes like **Forest school** and movements similar to **Eco-therapy**, are starting to address our disconnection by taking people into the wild without their digital screens, so that they can connect powerfully with the natural world.

When we get outside and explore this magnificent planet, there is something magical about nature that really quiets the mind, it's simplicity is comforting, we need to make sure we don't stray too far away from it.

I also like to encourage people to go barefoot as much as they can, especially out-doors.

There is a Kidney acupuncture point right on the ball of the foot called **Gushing Spring** (Yongquan). When an acupuncture needle is put into this point, it helps to descend the energy in the body, so can help treat headaches, nausea and insomnia. By walking barefoot we stimulate this point with acupressure.



Another strategy I apply when I'm starting to feel overwhelmed is to keep a piece of paper in my pocket with just one question on it...



*What's really important  
in life?*

**LAUGHTER IS THE  
BEST MEDICINE**



They say *'a good laugh and a long sleep is the best cure in the doctors book'* and I think that's pretty accurate (although antibiotics certainly have their place!).

So here's a joke I'd like to share with you...

A man took a duck into his doctor's office and said "Doctor, can you please confirm that this duck is dead?". The doctor takes out her stethoscope and after examining the duck, she confirms that the duck is dead.

"Are you absolutely certain?" says the man.

"Well, if you want, I can get a second opinion?" replies the doctor and she ushers in a large dog, who wanders over to the duck, sniffs it, and turns its nose up.

"I think that confirms the duck is indeed dead" she says.

"I'm still not sure" replies the man tentatively.

"OK, how about this?" she says and welcomes in a cat, who also checks the duck and turns away quickly.

"So, now that we have reached a decision, I can confirm that my consultation will cost £200" announced the doctor.

"£200!" exclaimed the man, "that's rather a lot to confirm the death of a duck!".

"Well" replied the doctor "since you had a lab test and a cat scan, it became more expensive".

**IT TAKES TWO  
TO TANGO**



The meaning behind this phrase, suggests that two parties involved in a situation, are both equally responsible for it. Now traditionally this idiom could have been used to describe the conception of a child. However these days, with surrogate mothers, sperm/egg donors and a multitude of scientific interventions, creating a human life can bring a whole load more people into the equation (it's a proper party!).

To all the men reading this, if you are thinking about skipping this section, then bear with me, there's some information in here for you too. This is about **Fertility**. Being fertile isn't a state of being, it is a by-product of great health. If you get super well, it stands to reason that your fertility will follow.

That is the premise from which I treat my patients who come to improve their chances of conception. In my experience, those chances are increased dramatically, if both are participating in acupuncture and not just the female. I find it to be a very powerful statement when both the male and female involved show up for treatment. When a couple have chosen to course correct their finances and time, in order to accommodate acupuncture, amazing things happen.

Building a family is not just about whether a couple conceives. It's also about carrying full-term, carrying well, having a good delivery, recovery from the birth quickly and probably the most important aspect, producing a robust child.

Healthy gametes (the egg and the sperm) come as a direct result of a couples commitment to preparation. In China it is not uncommon for doctors to treat couples 3-6 months before they even start trying to conceive, because they know that building to your optimal state of health takes time.

Those couples who ensure an optimal start to pregnancy, are in many ways, making the most important contribution that parents can make for their children. Giving our children a strong constitution, is as important as feeding, clothing and educating them well.

# FINAL NOTE

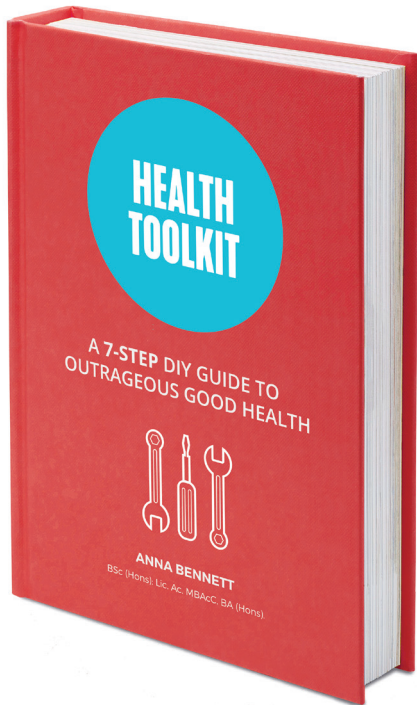
Our healthcare journey is life-long, it's a constant re-evaluation of where we find ourselves. If I were to recommend just one thing that would have the most positive impact on that journey, it would be hydration - without a shadow of a doubt.

About 90% of my patients sit down in front of me and say "I know I don't drink enough water, I could probably do better." I also include myself in those statistics.

Consuming the amount of water that we 'know' is good for us during the day, can sometimes seem like a mammoth task. With that in mind, I created one rule that I knew I could personally commit to. **Drink just one large glass of water completely, before getting out of bed each morning.** That's it, job done. By doing this, I can at least start my day hydrated and as a consequence, I seem to have a natural thirst for more water. Maybe that could work for you?



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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



## **Anna Bennett**

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Anna played Hockey for England and Great Britain from 1994-2011, taking a 6 year break in the middle to study Acupuncture.

Her first degree, was in Graphic Design from Kingston University, London (1999). Her second degree, was in Chinese Medicine, from The College of Integrated Chinese Medicine in Reading, Berkshire, which is also affiliated to Kingston University, London (2004). In 2008, Anna visited the second largest hospital in Guangzhou, China. There, she observed how acupuncture and herbs are integrated with western pharmaceuticals and surgery, within a busy urban hospital. She has practiced Chinese medicine for over a decade, running her own clinic since she qualified in 2008.

Both this PDF and her book, are the culmination of all of her skills, as they blend her passion for sport, art and medicine.



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